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SUMMARY

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The mechanization problem in all its ramifications and the anticipated setbacks in the livestock industry under winter conditions predominate the output on agriculture. Propaganda pressure is familiarly concentrated on the human element behind the technical troubles since, as it is implicitly suggested, agricultural implements are in abundant supply and their quality is good. It is the lack of mechanical skill paralleled by an equal lack of enthusiasm for further mechanization that are said to constitute the chief bottleneck of agricultural production. Repeatedly attacked are the heads of collective farms and other agricultural officials who acquire new machines for their respective farms or areas only to let them stand idle while continuing to use manual labor for the type of work that could and should have been mechanized long ago. The old propaganda refrain about possible livestock losses due to cold weather is still heard in connection with the expected "severe frosts" (surovie morozy) and the continuing shortage of adequate winter quarters and fodder supplies. Reiterated frequently also is the warning to agricultural officials against "a repetition of the mistakes of 1951" (povtorenie oshibok 1951 goda) when the industry suffered severe losses of young cattle followed by a substantial drop in the productivity of the undernourished stock.

Broadcasts on industrial activities emphasize the "struggle for excellent quality" (borba za otlichnoye kachestvo) and "profitable operations" (rentabelnost) as the two major production goals, although quantity output is not entirely left out of account. Regional appeals for the introduction and observance of the "economy regime" (rezhim ekonomii) in production, particularly in the consumer industry, are reinforced with accounts of lavish and excessive expenditures of raw materials and their deleterious effect on the State economy and the people's welfare. The housing shortage, a subject of infrequent discussion, is admitted to be acute (ostriy), and one of the familiar, and to some extent probably true, reasons given is that local Party and administrative officials still consider housing for workers a matter of secondary importance. (The emphasis on the word local is significant and in keeping with the general line that all sources of economic troubles reside in the improper implementation of the well-intentioned directives from above.) Dishonesty among retail trade personnel is referred to as a contributing factor in the shortage and inferior quality of footwear and other consumer items.

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